



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2021 ANNUAL REPORT: LAUREL COUNTY

OUR FOCUS

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program (KYNEP or NEP) encompasses two separate USDA programs: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Both programs provide educational opportunities for limited-resource individuals and families to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and change behaviors for improved health and well-being.

OUR CHALLENGE

Poverty

According to U.S. Census estimates for 2020, the median household income in Kentucky is **\$52,256**, 20% lower than the U.S. median household income of **\$65,712**.¹ Kentucky also has higher percentages of overall and child poverty¹ and food insecurity² among its population compared to 2020 Census and Department of Agriculture estimates for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
Total Poverty¹	16.0%	12.3%
Child Poverty¹	20.9%	16.8%
Food Insecurity²	13.8%	10.5%

In 2020, an estimated **23.2%** of Laurel County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **27** were residents under age 18.¹

Obesity and physical inactivity

Today, **60%** of all Americans live with at least one chronic disease. These include heart disease and stroke, cancer, and diabetes.³ These diseases are all associated with obesity and physical inactivity. In 2020, Kentucky ranked



in the top five states in the country for obesity with a rate of **36.6%** for adults.⁴ The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians is **32%**, ranking it in the top seven most physically inactive states in the nation.⁵ A large amount of data show that healthy eating habits and regular physical activity can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic disease throughout life.³

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Kentucky report shows that **38%** of Laurel County's adult population have obesity and **32%** were physically inactive.⁵

OUR SOLUTION

Provide hands-on nutrition education to limited-resource audiences, focusing on:

- Buying and preparing healthy foods
- Developing new meal planning and cooking skills
- Adopting new healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Managing SNAP resources

In 2021, **20,289** contacts were made with Laurel County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN LAUREL COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **100%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **96%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **81%** made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Helping Fight Hunger

According to the United States Census, Kentucky has a higher percentage of poverty and food insecurity among its population compared to the census estimate for the United States. In 2016, an estimated more than 13,000 Laurel County residents lived in poverty and more than 4,000 were youths under 18. This represents a 21.5% increase in total poverty and an almost 12% poverty increase in children since 2008. The EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) assistant senior, along with the 4-H agent and assistants, partnered with United Way and the Laurel County Schools to help

distribute meals to nine different locations. Volunteers also served to help distribute meals. More than 10,000 meals were served in June and July when school was not in session. Children were given educational materials which included information on MyPlate and the food groups. Sidewalk chalk and jump ropes were enjoyed by the kids and they played games which encouraged physical activity. The Laurel County Cooperative Extension Service was rewarded by the smiles on the children's faces when they picked up their food. Hunger is real and it was fulfilling to help children struggling with poverty and food insecurity.



University of Kentucky Nutrition Education Program Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates 2020
2. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service
3. CDC National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion 2019
4. The State of Obesity Report 2020
5. CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

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